Sub C.) 18. (Amended) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 9, wherein one of a plurality of rows of races in said wheel bearing is formed on an outer diameter portion of a hub ring constituting the wheel bearing, and another race is formed on an outer diameter portion of a separate inner ring abutting said hub ring.

B.) (unclear)

IN THE DRAWINGS:

Attached is a Request for Approval of Drawing Corrections and amended Figs. 40 and 41, which have --Prior Art-- labels added thereto.

REMARKS

The Office Action dated February 20, 2002 has been received and carefully noted. The preceding amendments and the following remarks are submitted as a full and complete response thereto. Claims 10-13, 15, 17, and 18 are amended. No new matter has been added. Claims 1-8, 16 and 19-38 were withdrawn from consideration. Accordingly, Claims 9-15, 17 and 18 are pending in this application and are submitted for consideration.

The Abstract was objected to for a number of informalities. A replacement Abstract is attached hereto, which corrects the alleged informalities. Accordingly, Applicants request that the objection be withdrawn.

The specification was objected to for a number of informalities. In particular, the term "mouse portion" was objected to. The specification is amended herein, and the term "mouse portion" has been changed to --house portion--. Accordingly, Applicants request that the objections to the specification be withdrawn.

Claims 10-15, 17 and 18 were objected to because they depend from claims 1, 5 and 6 which were withdrawn from consideration by the election of species requirement. Claims 10-15, 17 and 18 are amended to correct the dependencies. Accordingly, Applicants request that the objection be withdrawn.

Claims 11, 13-15, 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 11, 13, 15, 17 and 18 are amended herein to correct the informalities. Regarding claim 18, it was asserted in the Office Action that it is not clear how the inner ring is separated from the hub ring, but is also engaged with the hub ring. Claim 18 is amended to recite that the inner ring "abuts" the hub ring. Support for this amendment is found on page 41, lines 12-13. Furthermore, the specification on page 35, line 16 is amended to disclose that the inner ring 37 is --separate-- from the hub ring 36, rather than "separated" from the hub ring. Applicants submit that claims 11, 13-15, 17 and 18 comply with the requirements of 35 USC §112 and therefore, request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 9 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by GKN (Published 1993). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and submit that claims 9 and 13 recite subject matter not shown or described by GKN.

Claim 9 defines a drive wheel bearing assembly having a fixed type constant velocity universal joint, coupled to a wheel bearing, mounted to one end portion of an intermediate shaft, and a sliding type constant velocity universal joint, coupled to a differential, mounted to the other end portion of said intermediate shaft. An allowable plunging down to a bottom portion of an outer joint ring of the sliding type constant velocity universal joint is set to at least a width of an inner joint ring of the fixed type

constant velocity universal joint at a minimum operative angle of the sliding type constant velocity universal joint.

Claim 13 adds the limitation that a seal boot is mounted on a stub shaft or on an outer diameter portion of the other end portion of the intermediate shaft

GKN discloses a constant velocity joint and drive shaft application. Figure B on page 16 of GKN discloses rear drive shafts for a rear wheel drive, an all wheel drive and a four wheel drive vehicle. Page 12 of GKN discloses constant velocity plunging joints and double offset joints. The double offset constant velocity plunging joints permit angular excursion of up to 24 and axial (plunging) movement of up to 55 mm. The double offset plunging joints have a shaft diameter of between 24 and 29 mm. Another undercut free fixed joints have shafts of 24 mm to 30 mm.

GKN fails to disclose that the allowable plunging down of the double offset joint is set to at least a width of an inner joint ring of the fixed joint. GKN discloses an axial or plunging movement of up to 55 mm. See page 12 of GKN. Although reference was made to page 7 of GKN for disclosing that the width of the inner joint ring of the fixed type joint is between 24 and 30 mm, GKN actually discloses that only the diameter of the shaft between the fixed joint and the double offset joint is between 24 and 30 mm. There is no clear teaching of the dimensions for an inner joint of the fixed joint.

The position was taken in the Office Action that the plunging of the double offset joint of 55 mm is at least equal to the shaft diameter of 24 to 30 mm. However, Applicants submit that the allowable plunging of the double offset joint is actually about two times greater than the diameter of the shaft. Therefore, even assuming arguendo that GKN disclosed an inner joint ring having a width of 24 to 30 mm, the axial or

plunging movement of the double offset joint would not be at least equal to this width. Thus, Applicants submit that GKN fails to disclose each and every features of the invention as recited in claim 9, upon which claim 13 depends. Accordingly, Applicants request that the rejection be withdrawn and claims 9 and 13 be allowed.

Claims 9, 13 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Krude (U.S. Patent No. 4,300,651). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and submit that claims 9 and 13 recite subject matter not shown or described by Krude.

Krude discloses a vehicle mounting and driving assembly including a constant velocity universal joint. A wheel bearing assembly consists of a wheel hub 1 which is constructed in a single piece with an inner bearing ring 2. An outer joint member 7 of the constant velocity universal joint is mounted on a wheel received in a bore of the inner bearing ring 2. The interior space of the universal joint is sealed on one side, by bellows 11 which are fixed on the outer surface of the outer joint member 7 and on the intermediate shaft 12 and, on the other side by a cover 13 which is fastened on the outer joint member 7. On the end of the intermediate shaft 12 which is located opposite the wheel universal joint, there is arranged a sliding universal joint which operates as the differential gear system universal joint and which also consists of an outer joint member 18, an inner joint member 19 arranged in the hollow space of the outer joint member 18 and balls 20 which are arranged in grooves of the two joint members and which serve to transmit torque therebetween.

Krude fails to disclose the feature of an allowable plunging down to a bottom portion of an outer joint ring of the sliding type constant velocity universal joint is set to at least a width of an inner joint ring of the fixed type constant velocity universal joint. In

contrast, Krude appears to disclose that any allowable plunging of the sliding universal joint (in which the inner joint member 19 is located) is considerably smaller than the width of the inner joint member 16. See Fig. 1 of Krude. There is no clear teaching in Krude of the allowable plunging of the sliding universal joint set to at least a width of the inner joint member 16 in Krude. Thus, Krude fails to show or describe each and every element of the invention as defined by claim 9, upon which claims 13 and 14 depend. Accordingly, Applicants request that the rejection be withdrawn and claims 9, 13 and 14 be allowed.

Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over GKN in view of Mizukoshi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,975,767). It was admitted in the Office Action that GKN fails to show or suggest a hollow portion communicating with a mouth portion of the outer joint ring. Mizukoshi was cited for allegedly curing this deficiency. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and submit that claim 10 recites features that are not shown nor suggested by any combination of the cited prior art.

Mizukoshi discloses a tone wheel built-in constant velocity joint. The joint has a hub 4d formed in a hollow cylindrical shape to communicate the axial opposite ends with each other to make the rolling bearing unit for the vehicle wheel light weight.

As discussed above with respect to claim 9, upon which claim 10 depends, GKN fails to disclose that an allowable plunging down of an outer joint ring of the sliding type constant velocity universal joint is set to at least a width of the inner joint ring of the fixed type constant velocity joint. Mizukoshi fails to disclose a sliding type constant velocity universal joint. Therefore, Mizukoshi cannot cure the deficiency in GKN with respect to

claim 9. Thus, the combination of GKN and Mizukoshi fails to teach or suggest each and every element of the invention as defined by claim 10. Accordingly, Applicants request that the rejection be withdrawn and claim 10 be allowed.

Claims 12, 15, 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over GKN in view of Fukumura (U.S. Patent No. 5,607,241). GKN was cited in the Office Action for teaching many of the claimed elements of the invention with the exception of the wheel bearing being plastically connected to the outer joint ring of the fixed type constant velocity universal joint; a separate inner ring engaging the outer joint ring of the fixed type constant velocity universal joint; a plurality of rows of races of the wheel bearing formed integrally on an outer diameter portion of the outer joint ring of the fixed type constant velocity universal joint; and a separate inner ring abutting the hub ring. Fukumura was cited for allegedly curing these deficiencies.

Fukumura discloses a wheel bearing assembly having a rotating member 1 made up of an outer ring 2 of a homokinetic joint and a hub 3 connected to one end of the outer ring 2. The outer ring 2 has a cylindrical shaft portion 4 on which the hub 3 is press-fitted. The shaft portion 4 and the hub 3 are welded together at one end of their joint area. Preferably, these pieces are welded together by spot welding, laser welding, electron beam welding or any other welding method that produces less heat. A bearing inner ring 13 is fitted on one end of the hub 3 to rollably support one of two rows of balls 8a and 8b.

Applicants submit that the combination of the Fukumura and the GKN references fails to disclose the claimed features of the invention. Claims 12, 15, 17 and 18 depend from claim 9. As discussed above, GKN fails to disclose the features of the invention as

recited in claim 9 with respect to the sliding type constant velocity joint. Fukumura fails to disclose a sliding type constant velocity universal joint. Accordingly, the combination of GKN and Fukumura fails to disclose or suggest that an allowable plunging down to a bottom portion of an outer joint ring of the sliding type constant velocity joint is set to at least a width of an inner joint ring of the fixed type constant velocity universal joint as recited in claim 9. Thus, the combination of GKN and Fukumura fails to teach or suggest each and every element of the invention as recited in claim 9 and therefore dependent claims 12, 15, 17 and 18. Accordingly, Applicants request that the rejection be withdrawn and claims 12, 15, 17 and 18 be allowed.

Claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over GKN in view of Misumi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,230,936). The GKN reference was cited for teaching many of the claimed elements of the invention with the exception of a seal boot being formed of resin. Misumi was cited for allegedly curing this deficiency.

Misumi discloses joint boots having cold resistance. The joint boots have a high level of durability by using a specified chlorinated polyethylene as a rubber material and by molding by use of specific cross linking components. To improve abrasive property and moldability, a small amount of a thermoplastic resin and rubber may be added.

Applicants submit that we can argue that the combination of GKN and Misumi fails to disclose the claimed features of the invention. Claim 14 depends from claim 9. As discussed above, with respect to claim 9, GKN fails to disclose or suggest an allowable plunging down of the sliding type constant velocity universal joint is set to at least a width of an inner joint ring of the fixed type constant velocity universal joint. Misumi also fails to teach or suggest an allowable plunging down of the sliding type

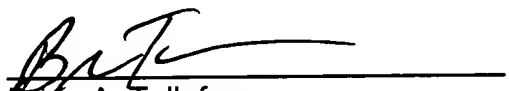
constant velocity universal joint is set to at least a width of an inner joint ring of the fixed type constant velocity universal joint. In particular, Misumi fails to disclose the details of the plunging down distance or the width of an inner joint ring. Thus, the combination of GKN and Misumi fails to disclose or suggest the features of the invention as recited in claim 9, and therefore dependent claim 14. Accordingly, Applicants request that the rejection be withdrawn and claim 14 be allowed.

In view of the above remarks, the Applicants respectfully submit that each of claims 9-15, 17 and 18 recite subject matter which is neither disclosed nor suggested in the cited prior art. Applicants submit that this subject matter is more than sufficient to render the claimed invention unobvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art. Applicants therefore request that each of 9-15, 17 and 18 be found allowable, and this application passed to issue.

If for any reason the Examiner determines that the application is not now in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact, by telephone, the Applicants' undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this application.

In the event this paper is not timely filed, the Applicants respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension together with any additional fees may be charged to Counsel's Deposit Account No. 01-2300.

Respectfully submitted,



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MARKED UP COPY OF AMENDED CLAIMS

10. (Amended) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to [any one of claims 5, 6, and 9] claim 9, wherein a stem portion of the outer joint ring of said fixed type constant velocity universal joint is made hollow, and the hollow portion is allowed to communicate with a [mouse] house portion of the outer joint ring.

11. (Amended) A drive wheel bearing assembly having a fixed type constant velocity universal joint, coupled to a wheel bearing, mounted to one end portion of an intermediate shaft, and a sliding type constant velocity universal joint, coupled to a differential, mounted to the other end portion of said intermediate shaft,

wherein an allowable plunging down to a bottom portion of an outer joint ring of said sliding type constant velocity universal joint is set to at least a width of an inner joint ring of said fixed type constant velocity universal joint at a minimum operative angle of the sliding type constant velocity universal joint,

wherein a stem portion of the outer joint ring of said fixed type constant velocity universal joint is made hollow, and the hollow portion is allowed to communicate with a mouse portion of the outer joint ring,

[A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 10,]wherein an end cap is mounted to a communicating region between the hollow portion of said stem portion and said [mouse] house portion, and a communicating portion is formed substantially at a center of the end cap.

12. (Amended) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to [any one of claims 1, 5, 6 or 9] claim 9, wherein said wheel bearing is plastically connected to the outer joint ring of said fixed type constant velocity universal joint.

13. (Amended) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to [any one of claims 1, 5, 6 or 9] claim 9, wherein a seal boot is mounted on [said] a stub shaft or on [the] an outer diameter portion of the other end portion of said intermediate shaft.

15. (Amended) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to [any one of claims 1, 5, 6 or 9] claim 9, wherein one of a plurality of rows of races in said wheel bearing is formed on an outer diameter portion of a hub ring constituting the wheel bearing, and another race is formed on an outer diameter portion of a separate inner ring engaging the outer joint ring of said fixed type constant velocity universal joint.

17. (Amended) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to [any one of claims 1, 5, 6 or 9] claim 9, wherein at least one of [the] a plurality of rows of races of said wheel bearing is formed integrally on [the] an outer diameter portion of the outer joint ring of said fixed type constant velocity universal joint.

18. (Amended) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to [any one of claims 1, 5, 6 or 9] claim 9, wherein one of [the] a plurality of rows of races in said wheel bearing is formed on [the] an outer diameter portion of [the] a hub ring constituting the

wheel bearing, and another race is formed on [the] an outer diameter portion of [the] a separate inner ring [engaging] abutting said hub ring.

MARKED UP COPY OF SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph bridging pages 16 and 17 as follows:

According to another embodiment of the present invention, the stem portion of the outer joint ring of said fixed type constant velocity universal joint may be preferably made hollow, and the hollow portion may preferably be allowed to communicate with a [mouse] house portion of the outer joint ring. With such a structure, it is made possible to push out the intermediate shaft located at the [mouse] house portion of the outer joint ring of the fixed type constant velocity universal joint from the hollow portion of said wheel bearing, thus facilitating dismounting of the intermediate shaft. In addition, since the wheel bearing and the [mouse] house portion of the outer joint ring of the fixed type constant velocity universal joint are made hollow in common to communicate with the atmosphere, thereby preventing an increase in temperature due to operation. Furthermore, it is made possible to reduce the weight of the bearing assembly. Furthermore, according to another embodiment of the present invention, in the structure in which an end cap is mounted to the communicating region between the hollow portion of said stem portion and said [mouse] house portion, a communicating portion may be preferably formed substantially at the center of the end cap. The structure adapted as such would prevent the boot from being expanded or contracted due to a change in the internal temperature of the fixed type constant velocity universal joint.

Please amend page 35, first paragraph as follows:

Between the outer joint ring 28 and the intermediate shaft 24, there is provided a seal boot 31 to prevent foreign matter from entering the constant velocity universal joint

25 and to prevent the leakage of the grease filled therein. The boot 31 is formed of rubber or resin in the shape of bellows, with the enlarged diameter edge portion inserted over the outer diameter portion of the [mouse] house of the outer joint ring 28 and the reduced diameter edge portion being inserted over the intermediate shaft 24, each of the portions being fixedly fastened by boot belts 32, 33.

Please amend page 35, second paragraph as follows:

The wheel bearing 21 comprises a hub ring 36 with a wheel mounting flange 35 having hub bolts 34 arranged circumferentially thereon at regular intervals to fix the wheel rib 2 (refer to Fig. 40), an inner ring 37 [separated] separate from the hub ring 36 and inserted over the shoulder portion of an outer joint ring 51, and an outer ring 39 having, on the outer circumference portion thereof, a vehicle mounting flange 38 to which a knuckle (not shown) is bolted to be fixed to the vehicle body.

Please amend page 36, first full paragraph as follows:

On the other hand, the fixed type constant velocity universal joint 22 comprises an inner joint ring 50 mounted to one end of the stub shaft 23 and provided with a track groove on the outer circumference portion thereof, the outer joint ring 51 on the inner circumference portion of which a track groove is formed, a plurality of torque transmission bearing balls 52 incorporated in between the track grooves of the inner and outer joint rings 50, 51, and retainers 53 interposed between the inner and outer joint rings 50, 51 to support the torque transmission bearing balls 52. The outer joint ring 51 has a [mouse] housing portion 54 formed generally in the shape of a dome and

a stem portion 55 integrated with the [mouse] housing portion 54. Incidentally, as the fixed type constant velocity universal joint 22, a joint of an under-cut free type is also applicable here.

Please amend page 38, second paragraph as follows:

Between the outer joint ring 51 of the constant velocity universal joint 22 and the stub shaft 23, there is a seal boot 62 provided to prevent foreign matter from entering the constant velocity universal joint 22 and the leakage of the grease filled therein. The boot 62 can be formed of rubber or resin in the shape of bellows. The enlarged diameter edge portion of the boot 62 is inserted over the outer diameter portion of the [mouse] house portion of the outer joint ring 51 of the constant velocity universal joint 22, while the reduced diameter edge portion thereof is inserted over the outer diameter edge portion of the enlarged diameter portion of the stub shaft 23, each of the portions being fixedly fastened by boot belts 63, 64.

Please amend page 56, second full paragraph as follows:

Incidentally, in the embodiment described above, such a case is explained in which the hub ring 36 of the wheel bearing 21 and the outer joint ring 51 are bolted to each other. In addition to this, it is also possible to employ such a structure in which the stem portion 55 of the outer joint ring 51 is made hollow to communicate with the [mouse] house portion 54, and the edge portion of the stem portion 55 of the outer joint ring 51 inserted into the bore of the hub ring 36 is caulked for connection.

Please amend the paragraph bridging pages 56 and 57 as follows:

The caulking shown in Fig. 15 illustrates a case where the edge portion of the stem portion 55 of the outer joint ring 51 is plastically deformed radially outwards. In addition, the caulking shown in Fig. 16 illustrates a case where a portion 81 of projections and depressions is formed on the outer circumference portion on the edge of the stem portion 55 such as by threading, serrating, or knurling, and the portion 81 of projections and depressions is, for example, plastically enlarged in diameter outwardly from the inner diameter toward the outer diameter side. Making the stem portion 55 of the outer joint ring 51 hollow will provide advantages such as improvements in fuel consumption resulted from the reduction in weight of the assembly and in heat dissipation to prevent an increase in temperature due to driving. Incidentally, the hollow portion of the stem portion 55 allows a shaft bore 82 to communicate with the bottom portion of the [mouse] house portion 54.

Please amend the paragraph bridging pages 57 and 58 as follows:

In this embodiment, particularly when the stem portion 55 of the outer joint ring 51 is made hollow and the hollow portion (the shaft bore 82) is allowed to communicate with the inside of the [mouse] house portion 54, an end cap 83 is mounted to the communicating region between the hollow portion of the stem portion 55 and the [mouse] house portion 54 to prevent the leakage of the grease filled in the[mouse] house portion 54. The end cap 83 is adapted to be mounted or dismounted through the hollow portion of the stem portion 55. That is, the end cap 83 is provided with an inner flange 84 having an opening on the stem portion side and can be dismounted by

hooking the inner flange 84 with the hook of a jig inserted into the hollow portion. It is preferable to provide the communicating portion generally at the center of said end cap 83. For example, as shown in Figs. 17(a) and 17(b), the communicating portion can be realized in a manner such that a hole is formed at the center of a metallic disc-shaped member 85, then an elastic body 86 formed such as of rubber for blocking the hole is attached thereto, and then a cross-shaped notch 87 is formed generally at the center of the elastic body 86. Alternatively, the communicating portion can also be realized by another structure, illustrated in Figs. 18(a) and 18(b), in which a core metal piece 88 comprising an annular member having a hole at the center thereof is coated with an elastic body 89 formed of such as rubber with a cross-shaped notch 90 provided generally at the center thereof.

Please amend the paragraph bridging pages 58 and 59 as follows:

The communicating portion (notch 87 and 90) provided on the end cap 83 as such allows the fixed type constant velocity universal joint 22 to communicate with the atmosphere through the inside of the [mouse] <u>house</u> portion 54 of the outer joint ring 51 and the hollow portion of the stem portion 55. This can prevent the boot 62 from being expanded or contracted due to a change in temperature inside the fixed type constant velocity universal joint 22, thereby making it possible to provide improved life for the boot 62.

Please amend page 59, first full paragraph as follows:

The intermediate shaft 24 and the inner joint ring 50 are connected to each other by the serrations 60, 61, and the C-shaped clip 77 is fitted over the annular groove 76 formed on the edge portion of the intermediate shaft 24, thereby preventing the intermediate shaft 24 from dislodging from the inner joint ring 50 (refer to Figs. 15 and 16). When the stem portion 55 of the outer joint ring 51 is made hollow to communicate with the [mouse] house portion 54, it is necessary to make the inner diameter d_2 of the shaft bore in the stem portion 55 of the outer joint ring 51 larger than the outer diameter d_1 of the C-shaped clip 77. This would make it possible to allow said clip 77 to be mounted to or dismounted from the shaft bore 82 of the stem portion 55 with a tool such as snap ring pliers.

MARKED UP COPY OF ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

[Disclosed herein is a drive wheel bearing assembly having a fixed type constant velocity universal joint, coupled to a wheel bearing, mounted to one end portion of an intermediate shaft, and a sliding type constant velocity universal joint, coupled to a differential, mounted to the other end portion of the intermediate shaft. The drive wheel bearing assembly is characterized in that one end portion of a stub shaft is connected to an inner joint ring of the aforementioned constant velocity universal joint via torque transmission portions; one end portion of the intermediate shaft is connected to the other end portion of the stub shaft via torque transmission portions; a threaded portion is formed on an outer diameter portion of either the intermediate shaft or the stub shaft; a nut member threadedly engages the threaded portion; and a keeper ring is fitted into annular grooves formed on the other outer diameter portion of the intermediate shaft or the stub shaft and an inner diameter portion of the nut member to allow the nut member not to move axially but to be rotatable. Furthermore, the aforementioned drive wheel bearing assembly comprises a stub shaft connected to an inner joint ring by means of serrations formed on an outer diameter portion of the one end thereof and a clip and connected detachably to the intermediate shaft by means of serrations formed on an inner diameter portion of the one end thereof and a clip. The drive wheel bearing assembly is characterized in that an enlarged diameter portion of a boot is mounted to the outer diameter portion of the other end portion of the stub shaft, and the inner diameter of the other end of the stub shaft is made larger than the outer diameter of the one end. Furthermore, in the aforementioned drive wheel bearing assembly, an

allowable plunging H_1 to the bottom portion of an outer joint ring of the aforementioned sliding type constant velocity universal joint is set, at the time of a minimum operative angle of the sliding type constant velocity universal joint, to a dimension ($K_1 + L_1$) which is equal to the width K_1 of the inner joint ring of the fixed type constant velocity universal joint added to a projection L_1 above the edge surface of the inner joint ring of the intermediate shaft. The hub ring and the inner ring are integrally unitized by means of a plastic engagement portion, caulked portions or the like. The outer joint ring of the constant velocity universal joint is coupled to the hub ring in a torque-wise manner via the serrations. An keeper ring is mounted detachably to the serrations to prevent the serrations from being axially dislodged and to allow the keeper ring to be easily snapped in place detachably] In a drive wheel bearing assembly, a fixed type constant velocity universal joint is coupled to a wheel bearing, mounted to one end of an intermediate shaft, and a sliding type constant velocity universal joint, is coupled to a differential, mounted to the other end portion of the intermediate shaft. One end portion of a stub shaft is connected to an inner joint ring of the constant velocity universal joint via torque transmission portions; one end portion of the intermediate shaft is connected to the other end portion of the stub shaft via torque transmission portions. A threaded portion is formed on an outer diameter portion of either the intermediate or stub shaft; a nut member threadedly engages the threaded portion; and a keeper ring is fitted into annular grooves formed on the other outer diameter portion of the intermediate shaft or the stub shaft and an inner diameter portion of the nut member allowing the nut member to rotate, but not move axially.